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Into the Sea: Capacity Building Innovations and the Maritime Security Challenge

Christian Bueger, Tim Edmunds, Robert McCabe

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Abstract

Maritime security capacity building is a growing field of international activity. It is an area that requires further study, both as field in its own right, but also as an architype to develop insights for capacity building and security sector reform in other arenas. This article is one of the first to analyse this field of activity. Our objective is to document the extent and variety of activities and to outline how and why they present a specific set of challenges for scholarly analysis and practitioners alike. The empirical focus of this article is on the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. Here, international actors have launched multiple capacity building projects, initially in response to Somali piracy. We examine the ways in which capacity building at sea has incorporated innovative characteristics, before reflecting on some of the pathologies and failures it has entailed.

Keywords: *Maritime Security, Capacity Building, Security Sector Reform, International Interventions, Western Indian Ocean*

Introduction

Maritime security has become a new priority area of international security. Piracy, smuggling or environmental crime at sea are increasingly seen as major challenges to the development and human security of coastal countries. They are also interpreted as threats to global commerce, energy security and as having potential links to violent extremism. Many international security actors situate maritime security high on their agendas. The G7 countries, for instance, issued in 2015 a declaration on maritime security that emphasised that a "sound and secure maritime domain" is required "in order to preserve peace, enhance international security and stability, feed billions of people, foster human development, generate economic growth and prosperity, secure the energy supply and preserve ecological diversity and coastal livelihoods."[1] The European Union (EU) published a maritime security strategy in 2014 to "secure the maritime security interests of the EU and its Member States against a plethora of risks and threats in the global maritime domain."[2] Britain (2014), France (2015), India (2015), Spain (2013) or the United States (2005) have concluded national maritime security strategies.

While these strategy documents differ in emphasis, they each infer that maritime security requires capacity building. For instance, the Indian document suggests that capacity building and capability enhancement are needed to address the "wide range, increasing numbers and large spread of maritime security challenges".[3] Whereas the French Strategy, implies the importance of building capacity by supporting "local players to handle their maritime security issues [through] initiatives undertaken by third-party States under the programmes to strengthen their capabilities".[4] Building capacity is also one of the five objectives outlined in the UK's[5], US[6] and EU strategies.[7] The shared observation in these documents and others, is that lack of maritime security

capacity in coastal states is a prime driver of maritime insecurity and therefore needs to be addressed. In consequence, maritime security capacity building has become a field of significant international activity, including major initiatives from the International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the European Union (EU), and numerous bilateral donors.

Although these activities represent significant investments in maritime security capacity building, they have largely gone unobserved in the academic discussions on international assistance, intervention, peace or state building.[8] The result is a double blindness. Practitioners and implementers have little to draw on in terms of guidance of how to conceptualize and cope with the challenges they are facing when engaging in maritime security capacity building; and in turn, the academic discussion misses out on one of the core recent developments in international politics: the substantial expansion of capacity building activities for maritime security.

This article is one of the first to analyse maritime security capacity building. Our objective is to document the significance, extent and variety of capacity building activities in this domain, but also to outline why they present considerable challenges for scholarly analysis and practitioners. We go on to examine the ways in which capacity building at sea has incorporated innovative characteristics, before reflecting on some of the pathologies and failures it has entailed, as well as tentative steps towards lesson learning.

Our discussion proceeds as follows. In section two, we situate maritime security capacity building in the wider debate on state building, security sector reform and capacity building. We also discuss the particular challenges of capacity building in this domain. Section three provides a short overview of the major capacity building

initiatives in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). We suggest that this region represents an emblematic case study of contemporary maritime security challenges. It has functioned as a crucible of innovation in the maritime security capacity building field with implications for similar endeavours elsewhere. In section four, we examine the specific innovations that such approaches have engendered in more depth, as well as the continuing challenges they face in practice. Our conclusion highlights the need to pay more attention to the maritime domain in international security and development studies and suggests ways to fertilize multi-disciplinary dialogue around these issues.

Capacity Building in the Maritime Environment

Capacity building has become an increasingly important component of international development, aid and state-building activities. To understand the particularities of capacity building in the maritime environment, it is important to situate these activities in a broader context.

Capacity building has become one of the buzzwords of international politics, in the sense that it is frequently used but rarely well defined.[9] The concept has a long history in development studies, though its contemporary manifestations have been refined and developed in various ways. Early formulations of capacity building tended to be technical in nature and focused on the building up of new state institutions and the development of existing ones. Recent approaches are more expansive. They focus on the development of human resources, organisational cultures and individual skills around notions of best practice, effectiveness and efficiency.[10] In this sense, capacity building has increasingly become about the construction of the well governed state.[11] It encompasses a comprehensive range of activities, actors and policy sectors, including

both formal and informal institutions and, as Mary Venner notes, a potentially wide range of issues, including government legitimacy, political stability, popular participation and community empowerment amongst others.[12] If capacity building is a prominent overarching activity, its application in the maritime field is more novel, and linked to the rise of maritime security.

The emergence of maritime security as a distinct international field of activity is recent with little consensus on how it should be organised, defined or governed. Incidents of terrorism at sea such as the 2000 attack on the USS Cole anchored in Yemen, the rise of modern piracy off the coast of Somalia and elsewhere and increasing awareness for the detrimental effects of transnational maritime crimes such as human trafficking, drug smuggling and illegal fishing, have all contributed to a growing engagement with the maritime dimension of international security.

Maritime security is not simply about the sea. The challenges it presents are closely inter-linked to issues of development and security on land, in terms of both cause and effect. The rise of piracy off the coast of Somalia for example, was a consequence of the collapse of the formal Somali state in the 1990s, and the various economic dislocations experienced by coastal communities.[13] The expansion of piracy in the region exacerbated existing regional economic hardships in neighbouring states, including loss in the fisheries sector or drops in income from tourism. curtailing, for example, visits by international cruise liners to Kenyan ports and having a major negative impact on the fisheries and tourism sector in the Seychelles; activities that constitute around 65 per cent of the country's GDP. [14]

Maritime security is also fundamentally transnational, in the sense that the challenges it presents often transcend or traverse individual nations' sovereign maritime territories

or take place on the high seas as a zone of shared international responsibility. Challenges are commonly cross-jurisdictional in nature, in that they may engender responses from navies, law enforcement, judicial and penal systems and development agencies, as well as from private actors such as shippers, fishers or privately contracted armed guards.[15] International efforts to combat fishery crimes, for example, necessarily involve policing and enforcement actions by the navies or coastguards of littoral states, judicial processes to deal with offenders, regional cooperation and regulation of various sorts - including through international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization - as well as engagement with internationally diverse private actors and companies at sea.[16] The geospatial characteristics of the oceans also engender basic epistemic challenges of how to know to know the sea and the movements and activities that take place upon it.[17]

The rise of the maritime capacity building agenda is both a response to and reflection of these challenges. It has its roots in earlier naval diplomacy activities, such as navy-to-navy cooperation, port visits and military exercises, as well as the compliance work and technical assistance provided by specialised maritime organisations such as the IMO.[18] Even so, contemporary maritime security capacity building has a number of distinctive features. These derive from the complex and interconnected nature of the maritime space itself, the diverse and often transnational range of actors involved, as well as from its increasingly expansive ambitions in relation to development and security in addressing the 'root causes' of maritime security challenges.

If capacity building as a concept is not new, its recent growth as a practice of international and regional security in the maritime environment represents a significant innovation. In its contemporary form, its emergence can be traced to international concerns about the rise of piracy off the coast of Somalia around 2007-8, and the need

to provide an exit strategy for the expensive and only partially effective naval missions that comprised international actors' initial responses to the pirate problem. Capacity building in regional states appeared to offer a longer-term solution to the issue of piracy by enabling regional actors to better police regional waters, and by addressing the root causes of piracy in Somalia itself.[19] Since 2012, it has also expanded to incorporate a wider range of maritime security concerns.

Security capacity building in the maritime environment shares many characteristics of similar activities on land, commonly understood through the concept of security sector reform (SSR).[20] The United States Institute for Peace was the first to define maritime security capacity building through the concepts of SSR. It defined maritime security sector reform (MSSR) as comprising of "comprehensive actions taken by littoral countries and a range of partners to improve the security, safety, and economic viability of maritime spaces by improving governance, infrastructure, and law enforcement capacity, creating a broader approach to SSR on the global stage."[21] At heart, it is about developing local security structures to be more effective and better governed. It is thus concerned with developing the capacities of security organisations themselves – navies, coastguards, port police –, with the institutions through which they are governed and administered – government departments, oversight mechanisms and so on –, and with wider structures and processes on which these depend, and which are dependent on them, such as courts and prisons.

Such activities prioritise the formal institutional security structures of the state, and broadly take place in a western liberal framework of "good governance."[22] As with its land-based equivalents, MSSR is distinguished by its holistic approach. It incorporates the full range of maritime security agencies under its remit, a wider spectrum of other

state competencies, including issues of infrastructure and economic development, as well as the courts and prison system.

However, maritime capacity building is also distinguished by its wider complexity, in consequence of the distinctive maritime environment in which it takes place, and which expand considerably on the MSSR agenda more narrowly defined. Such initiatives are often situated at a regional as well as national level; they incorporate epistemic technologies and practices relating to Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and information sharing; they are closely integrated with the interests and activities of private actors, including transport, fishing and tourist industries; and pose particular challenges of coordination and deconfliction given the range of international, national, institutional and community level actors involved.[23]

In summary, maritime security capacity building is a novel field of international activity that transcends land-sea boundaries and traditional SSR approaches. At present, these initiatives remain relatively immature compared to their more established counterparts on land, and there is much that may be gained from a more systematic sharing of experience between the two.[24] There are also lessons from the experience of maritime security capacity building, specifically in the Western Indian Ocean region, that are relevant to other maritime regions, and other fields of activity, which are explored in sections four and five of this article.

Building Capacity in the Western Indian Ocean

The Western Indian Ocean region has witnessed the most significant outbreak of piracy in the modern period, one of the consequences of which was that it became a test bed for maritime security capacity building activities. This has manifested in an expansive

range of capacity building projects led by international actors. In the first instance, international efforts focused on containment of pirate activity at sea, but quickly evolved into a more ambitious and holistic regional capacity building agenda for sustainable maritime security.[25] This focussed on building the judicial capacity of states to prosecute and imprison Somali pirates, while also reforming maritime security sectors to enable littoral states to take over key tasks from the international community and strengthen regional security governance structures and maritime domain awareness capabilities.[26] By 2013, these efforts had contributed to a substantial decline in incidents of piracy and an expansion of capacity building to address broader – but interlinked – maritime security challenges in the region.[27] According to the Secretary-General of the IMO, "the decline of piracy" presented "a window of opportunity […] to implement capacity building programmes to prevent a resurgence of piracy and to address wider issues including other transnational organized crimes committed at sea, as a basis for the sustainable development of the maritime sector."[28]

The Scope of Capacity Building Programmes in the WIO

Maritime capacity building initiatives are extensive, and an impressive array of actors are involved in implementation from international organisations, national agencies to private actors.

The IMO has been one of the most active international capacity builders in the region. Its activities have included needs assessment and advisory missions, regional workshops and long-term training courses. The organisation facilitates the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC), which is one of the principle regional cooperation mechanisms for maritime security. While the DCoC was originally established to

coordinate regional anti-piracy activities, it broadened its remit in 2017 through the so-called Jeddah Amendment, to address wider maritime security issues including a strong "blue growth" agenda and issues such as fisheries crime.[29]

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is the main capacity-building organisation in the area of law enforcement at sea, and delivers training in areas such as boarding, evidence collection, arrest, or prosecution. Its work was initially concerned with developing criminal justice capacities in Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles and Somalia in order to prosecute and incarcerate piracy suspects according to international human rights standards. Its activities have since developed into a wider Global Maritime Crime Programme, active in 20 countries worldwide and incorporating a full range of maritime crimes. In 2015, the programme established a major regional mechanism, the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime. The Forum coordinates regional actors in maritime law enforcement activities and focusses in particular on illicit trade and smuggling.[30]

A third key international actor in the area has been the EU. In 2008, it launched its first naval mission, EUNAVFOR Atalanta, to combat piracy in the region. The EU subsequently introduced a series of capacity building programmes. These include the EUCAP Nestor mission, later succeeded by EUCAP Somalia, which aspires to develop maritime civilian law enforcement capabilities in the region.[31] The EU supported the DCoC through its MARSIC project (Enhancing Maritime Security and Safety through Information Sharing and Capacity Building) running from 2010 to 2015. The Critical Maritime Routes Indian Ocean programme (CRIMARIO), launched in 2016 as the successor to MARSIC focussed on facilitating maritime situation awareness, data fusion and information sharing amongst regional states through training and the provision of an information sharing platform. Another major initiative was the

Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security (MASE). MASE was implemented through partnerships between regional organisations, such as the Indian Ocean Commission, and international capacity builders, such as UNODC and the IMO. It worked on developing local capabilities for the arrest and prosecution of pirates, the disruption of their financial networks, and regional coordination and information exchange.[32]

A significant number of individual state actors also conduct capacity building activities either on a bilateral basis with regional states or through donations to concrete projects in countries. Traditional international donors, such as the Denmark, Norway, Japan, the UK, or the US have in particular worked with regional states to develop and enhance their maritime security sectors and criminal justice capacities. Also new donors, such as China, India, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates have engaged significantly in areas such as port infrastructure development and equipment donation programmes across the region as a whole.

Maritime capacity builders draw on a number of different tools and approaches in their activities. These can be distinguished in terms of the various sectors and organisations at which they are targeted (coastguards or courts for example), and also by means of the types of capacity that are delivered. Capacity has been material, in the sense of donated equipment and infrastructure construction projects; from computers and evidence collection kits, to coastguard vessels, buildings such as prisons and courts, or entire installations such as port facilities. The majority of activity has focussed on the development of human resource capacities through mentoring, knowledge exchange or education and training; on organisational capacities through the placement of embedded advisors in government departments and agencies; on legal assistance such as drafting new laws, or on operational practices such as evidence collection or

handover procedures.[33] At a regional level, they have included support through facilitating meetings of maritime security professionals and country representatives, community-building fora, and the provision of technical advice and assistance on issues such as information sharing or MDA mechanisms.

Taken as a whole, these efforts represent as a distinct body of international activity that encompasses but also moves beyond the traditional confines of the security sector reform agenda. Such activities are wide ranging and ambitious in scope, and often take place across and between traditional regional classifications derived from the land. It is also notable that despite the decline of piracy off the coast of Somalia in 2012, capacity building in the WIO has if anything gathered pace, with initiatives and programmes increasingly broadening their remit to include a full suite of maritime security challenges. The following sections examine the innovative features of maritime capacity building in the WIO in more depth.

Innovating at Sea

The WIO has functioned as a crucible of innovation in capacity building for three main reasons. Firstly, the rise of piracy in the region from 2008 was perceived as a major international crisis requiring action on the level of the UN Security Council and contributions by all of the major states quickly became securitized at an international level. Secondly, international actors agreed quickly on the nature of the problem and that in addition to naval responses, assistance on land was also required. Thirdly, when the first capacity building projects were launched, maritime capacity builders had few existing models, recorded experience, or bodies of practice to draw on in formulating their programmes. In part, this was a result of the novel nature of the maritime security

challenge, but also because the institutional actors involved, such as coast guards, had little experience of conducting similar programmes on land. Taken together these three conditions – the crisis state, the shared problem definition, and the lack of knowledge – have given capacity building activities in the region an experimental character.

As we show in the following section, this experimentalism has produced a number of innovations which will be also of relevance in other capacity building settings. With the concept of innovation, we refer to novel approaches of implementing, organising and steering capacity building. As organisation scholars studying innovation processes have argued, innovation is a "messy and complex" process where novelty emerges through exploration and experimentation.[34] The innovations we discuss below can be understood as innovations in the way that they reconfigure or reassemble existing ideas and approaches in the context of maritime security and test and improve them.

While there are others, we focus on three. Firstly, the way that through capacity building new types of regional constellations were produced by thinking from the sea, rather than the land. Secondly, the use of informality and networks as a coordination and governance tool. Thirdly, new forms of technology were appropriated to make security knowledge production and surveillance an essential element of projects.

Building Regions

Many capacity building programmes, in particular those pursued by the European Union, include an explicit regional dimension and region building ambitions.[35] The goal is to enable regional organisations to address challenges on a regional level, but also to develop and store institutional knowledge and expertise at a regional body, so it can provide future capacity building to its member states. Through such work, regional

institutions are strengthened, as is regional identity. In contrast to such programmes on land, where support tends to focus on established regional inter-governmental organisations, maritime security work often entails the need to invent and create new regional formations. Regional thinking stems from the problems of the maritime, which differ from constellations on land, for instance, due to geographic conditions and trade flows. The WIO region can hence be seen as a particular constellation bringing in and merging different regions as they are constructed from the land. These include regional constructs such as Eastern and Southern Africa, institutionalised in organisations such as the East African Community or the Southern African Development Community, and the WIO islands and the Indian Ocean Commission in the West, the Middle East and the Arab League in the North, as well as South Asia in the East. The regions that are built as part of maritime security work in the WIO combine these established regional constructs in unique manners.

Region building through maritime security capacity building has taken place firstly through new technical coordination spaces. Faced with the rise of piracy incidents, international actors created two novel zones to coordinate anti-piracy operations and to protect international transport. The International Recommended Transit Corridor in the Gulf of Aden, which straddles the maritime transit route between the Arabian Peninsula and Horn of Africa was created as a safe zone for shipping but also to optimise the benefits from employing patrols in the area.[36] The High Risk Area for shipping comprised almost all of the Western Indian Ocean, extends eastwards into Indian territorial waters and southward to Mozambique and was designed in collaboration between the shipping industry and international navies as the space where particular precautionary measures should be adopted and the industry cooperates closely with regional security actors.[37]

Secondly, capacity building initiatives in the WIO entailed new multilateral regional constructs. Within these formats interaction between littoral states who may have had little experience of working together in the past were facilitated. The DCoC, for example, was designed as an explicitly cross-regional constellation: it brings together states from Eastern and Southern Africa with those from the Arabian Peninsula in a common agreement.[38] The DCoC originated in the IMO's attempt to build regional cooperation and capacity building mechanisms for maritime safety around the world. Building new mechanisms from a genuine maritime perspective, for the IMO the Arab Peninsula and the Eastern African coast, should be seen as genuine maritime security space with shared patterns of trade flows and hence crimes. Originally an attempt to address maritime security broadly, when it was signed the DCoC agreement concerned piracy only. This was later rectified in the 2017 amendments to the code. At the heart of the DCoC process are joint capacity building and training initiatives, an information exchange network through a focal point system, as well as three regional information sharing centres that aim to facilitate cooperation between the signatory states.

Another example is the EUs MASE programme. It is designed to bring together a variety of existing regional organisations to work together in the field of maritime security. Under the acronym of ESA-IO, the key organisations of the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean are each responsible for reaching a core objective. This includes the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).[39] Part of MASE was to install a new governing body, the Technical Steering Committee, comprised of focal points from each regional organisation as well as member states. The committee not only reviews progress on

implementation but also is designed to be "a platform for coordination and harmonization between donors, other Technical Assistance providers, recipient countries and regional organisations."[40]

These are examples of capacity building activities that are productive of the WIO region in and of itself. Indeed, the descriptor "Western Indian Ocean region" can be seen as an outcome of such processes. Prior to 2010, WIO had only rarely been used to describe this region; it required the region building work through the HRA, the DCoC or MASE to construct it. Such efforts represent more than simple re-labelling exercises. Instead, they provide frameworks for substantive coordination and cooperation between regional actors with little experience of working together in the past. In so doing they have defined and hardened the WIO as a meaningfully inter-linked maritime security region. The following two sections explore the manifestations of these new regional constellations of actors around issues of maritime security governance and knowledge production.

Building Networks

A second innovative characteristic of maritime security capacity building in the WIO is the establishment of new informal networks of actors to set priorities, coordinate activities and facilitate implementation. These initiatives are linked to the emergence of the new WIO region and are reminiscent of what peacebuilding scholars have referred to as "networks of effective action".[41] The networks are informal in the sense that they sideline formal diplomatic hierarchies, experimental in that they try out new configurations of actors and move beyond more conventional forms of coordination. Instead, and as Tim Donais notes, the starting point for the formation of such networks

is to privilege "'what works' over grand transformational agendas".[42] They represent an attempt to overcome the key challenges of coordination and focus that have plagued many traditional approaches to SSR.[43]

The emergence of capacity building networks in the WIO has been engendered by two features of the maritime security environment in the region described in section two. To cope with the diversity of different actors involved, and the multi-jurisdictional character of maritime security informal governance techniques were adopted to reduce cooperation costs and geopolitical tensions and ensure a focus on practical, problem-solving activities.[44] Secondly, the experimental nature of much maritime security capacity building has lent itself to informality. The risk of failure of such activities may be higher than tried and tested approaches, while the stakes of potential failure are lowered.

Three examples of organising and coordinating capacity building in such networks are the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime (IOFMC) and the DCoC.

The CGPCS is a global governance mechanism that was established to coordinate international and regional counter-piracy activities off the coast of Somalia. The G20 states, major shipping nations as well as the shipping industry and non-governmental organisations participate in the group's meetings. Organised in a plenary and several working groups, one of the tasks of the group is to coordinate capacity building.

The CGPCS is characterised by its relatively ad hoc structure, and functions as a process-driven, informal organisation working on principles of inclusivity rather than representation.[45] The former chairperson of the CGPCS described it as a "diplomatic initiative" that grew into an "expansive, elastic, multi-faceted mechanism" that "has

acted as a lynchpin in a loosely structured counter-piracy coalition", but that has "no formal institutional existence."[46] The 2014-2015 chairperson described it as "an inclusive forum for debate without binding conclusions" without "any real structural formality."[47] The flexibility and informality combined with the regularity of meetings has allowed it to play a significant orchestrating role in maritime security capacity building in the region.

As part of its early agenda, the CGPCS conducted an assessment in the region that was formalised in a so-called 'Needs Assessment Matrix'. The results were presented in a spreadsheet detailing each country's maritime capacity building needs and current status. The matrix became the starting point for designing the EU programmes, but also that of several national donors.[48]

The CGPCS facilitated the planning of targeted capacity building mainly implemented by UNODC, which ensured that prosecution and imprisonments in regional states, such as Kenya, Seychelles or Tanzania follow human rights standards. This capacity building work became one of the pillars of what is known as the 'arrest, transfer and prosecution' model under which international navies arrest piracy suspects and then hand them over to regional states where they are prosecuted.[49]

In 2012, the CGPCS created a sub group dedicated fully to capacity building. The format allowed receiving states to express their needs, but also enabled the information exchange between donors and implementers.[50] Following an informal exchange at the CGPCS, for instance, the IMO and NATO started a collaboration in capacity building: The IMO started to use NATO's facilities and trainers at its Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre in Crete, Greece. The group also experimented with a new digital coordination tool and an American developed a web-based platform for that

purpose. The fully searchable platform presented existing capacity building projects by countries and objectives, allowed donors to communicate their plans and provided a platform for receiving states to have their needs recorded.

Another experiment in new informal governance is the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime. Created in 2015 by the UNODC the idea was to draw on the success in the counter-piracy domain and start targeting other maritime crimes by similar means. The Forum comprises "22 littoral states of the Indian Ocean" and "brings together national law enforcement counterparts within thematic groups on maritime crime". [51] The Forum holds regular meetings in different formats, including a Prosecutor's Network, which works with a shared online tool for information sharing. As the most successful component of the Forum, the Southern Route Partnership was created to specifically target the trafficking of Afghan heroin to Asia and Eastern Africa. Several larger drug interdictions conducted in cooperation with the international community have been related to the work of the Partnership. The Forum also led to the signing of a declaration on regional coordination and cooperation in drug enforcement in 2016.[52]

The DCoC, already discussed, can also be understood as such a form of a pragmatic network. As a non-legally binding soft law instrument, the DCoC is in the first instance a declaration of cooperation and intent to share information and experiences. It is also a framework through which capacity building, in particular training, can be organised and through which the focal points from each participating country can collaborate.

These informal networked cooperation mechanisms represent both a response to and a reflection of the particular challenges of the maritime security environment and focus on processes of pragmatic problem-oriented networking, community building and

learning rather than formal regulation and ensuring compliance with rules. The third innovation we turn to is the integration of epistemic activities and developing information sharing infrastructures as a precondition for enforcement at sea.

Producing Maritime Security Knowledge

That in order to address a particular threat, it needs to be rendered knowledgeable first, is a fact often neglected in traditional land-based and state focussed SSR and capacity building. In the maritime arena, significant efforts have been made to build capacities for information sharing, incident reporting and shared analysis of patterns and trends. These are known by the concepts of maritime domain awareness or maritime situational awareness. In the WIO case initiatives take the region as their starting point rather than the state per se. They aim to strengthen the capacity of actors to gain knowledge of what is going on in the maritime space, and to share that knowledge with each other to develop a shared understanding, but also joint or at least coordinated responses.

One of the ways in which the maritime is distinct from the land is the nature of the ocean space itself. Ocean spaces are not settled or inhabited, they are fluid and are not readily controlled or surveilled.[53] Knowing what goes on at sea remains a major task and one that even the most advanced and well-resourced maritime nations struggle with. Seychelles offers an example of the scale of the challenge involved. Its territorial waters and EEZ are 1.3 million square km; larger than the total landmass of Germany, France and the United Kingdom combined.[54] Yet its coastguard comprises only 15 vessels, only seven of which are fully ocean going. The international waters of the WIO are of another order of vastness again, traversed each year by many hundreds of thousands of ships and smaller vessels such as dhow traders or fishing boats. Tracking

individual suspicious vessels and detecting whether they are involved in illicit activities in such a space is a challenge of considerable proportions.

A significant portion of international assistance in the WIO is devoted to developing surveillance and information sharing capacities. In MASE, CRIMARIO as well as DCoC such capacities are at the heart of the programmes.[55]

The DCoC for example established three Information Sharing Centres (ISCs) in Sana'a (Yemen), Mombasa (Kenya) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) with the goal of quickly disseminating information on piracy incidents or other suspicious activities to maritime actors in the region.[56] Two of the five pillars under the MASE programme focus on maritime domain awareness. The outcome was the creation of two regional centres: the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center (RMIFC) in Madagascar was tasked with collecting, fusing and analysing information on the regional waters and distributing it to the participating countries or making it available for public consumption; the Regional Operation Coordination Centre (ROCC) in Seychelles was tasked with developing models of how the limited capacities in the region could be pooled, patrols optimised and the response time to incidents lowered.[57] A regional agreement for both centres was signed in spring 2018. In addition, the EU project CRIMARIO launched the Indian Ocean Information Sharing Network in September 2018. The network intends to connect the regional centres and the national counterparts and aims at offering a low-key facility to communicate and share incident data and other information.

These initiatives represent a significant effort to strengthen regional knowledge structures and information sharing activities across the WIO region. They are innovative in the way that they take knowledge production as a core capacity to respond

adequately to insecurity, and they are innovative in the way that they do so at the level of regions rather than the state. The ambition of such centres has also been considerable, focusing on technological solutions such as advanced surveillance technology and big data analysis.[58]

In many ways, however, the success of such approaches remains nascent. The three ISCs established through the DCoC remain active largely in principle rather than practice, functioning primarily as clearing houses for routine calls and, in the case of the Sana'a centre, issuing a weekly report to stakeholders. The centres have struggled to gain traction in part because they duplicate the work of the more established, EU-operated Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa and because of a lack of willingness to directly report to them rather than national law enforcement or flag state authorities. The MASE centres are in their start-up phase. Moreover, the technological ambitions of the centres have proven difficult to realise given existing weaknesses in maritime capacity and resource constraints amongst regional countries. Indeed, there is a risk that such technological solutions are crowding out simpler, intelligence and community-led approaches such as working with human sources or engagement projects with coastal populations. Such difficulties are indicative of the fact that, while maritime security capacity building activities in the WIO have played host to numerous innovations, they have also seen instances of failure.

Pathologies and Failures

It is the nature of experiments that they sometimes fail, and the WIO case is no exception. Capacity building efforts in the region face continuing challenges, many of which are common to security sector reform programmes elsewhere. These include

difficulties of coordination, competition and duplication in a crowded institutional field; a common tendency towards technocracy, short termism and 'project logics' in programme design and delivery; a reluctance to invest time in understanding the local context and political environment; and continuing deficits of local ownership and engagement.[59]

These challenges have been intensified by the relative novelty of the maritime capacity building field. While this has had the advantage of encouraging experiment and innovation such as the areas we document above, it has also meant there has been little institutional memory or experience to draw on when doing so. In consequence, many programmes have repeated well-documented mistakes from earlier experiences on land. The EUs EUCAP Nestor mission for example struggled for these reasons. Its initial needs assessment was perfunctory, its mandate's degree of ambition was not matched by available resources, whether financial or human, and it struggled to achieve buy-in from regional partner states. Direction of the mission's activities from the EU in Brussels was also centralised and bureaucratic, with an emphasis on swiftly achieving pre-mandated deliverables linked to its two-yearly mandate extension and budget cycle, rather than the success of the capacity building endeavour as a whole.[60]

Because maritime security capacity building takes place on a regional as well as national canvass, it engages a diverse range of actors and interests. Duplication has been common, as the case of the multiple MDA centres discussed above illustrates. So too has competition between donors over project partners, funding and priorities. While the networks we identify above have played an important role in setting priorities and facilitating action, coordination at the operational level has often proven difficult. Some of these challenges have been knowledge related: in the sense of international actors implementing programmes with little sensitivity towards local political or maritime

context. [61] As the example of the MDA centres again helps to illustrate, others relate to the kinds of knowledge at play, with external expert or technical approaches sometimes crowding out existing practices or well-established local ways of doing things.

There have also been differences of interest between international and regional actors, with the former tending to foreground counter-piracy work, and the latter blue growth issues or land-based security issues.[62] Indeed, most states in the region lack a strong seagoing tradition and have historically prioritised security or economic development issues on land. In this context, and not entirely without justification, maritime capacity building efforts have sometimes been seen to derive primarily from the economic security concerns of the West rather than the Global South. These perspectives are changing, in part because of the rise of issues such as drug trafficking at sea and the increasing importance of attached to the blue economy agenda in Africa and elsewhere.[63] Even so, and with a few exceptions such as Seychelles, maritime issues have tended to be accorded a lower political priority than other policy sectors and engagement with international capacity building initiatives has sometimes been hesitant.

One example of these challenges is the case of the web platform established by the CGPCS to facilitate capacity building coordination and to match needs and offers. The Capacity Building Coordination Platform (CBCP) failed to gain traction amongst participants. Donors and implementers were reluctant to share current or planned activities with other participants.[64] Receiving countries did not populate the platform by entering their needs, not least because there was a lack of awareness and training in how to operate and use the forms. It also proved difficult to establish a baseline of needs, which made the CBCP seem reactive rather than proactive and meant that the

meetings of the coordination group focused overly on technical aspects of the web-based platform.

As maritime capacity building activities in the region have matured, there have been examples of reflexivity of practice amongst some actors, including a willingness to recognise failure where it has occurred and redesign activities in the light of lessons learned. The reform of EUCAP Nestor is an example of these changes. Following an Interim Strategic Review in 2015, a series of reforms were initiated. The mission was refocussed on work in Somalia, renamed EUCAP Somalia in 2016, its headquarters moved from Djibouti to Mogadishu, and activities elsewhere in the region were phased out. It also broadened its remit to include wider issues of maritime security more in line with local priorities, such as combatting illegal fishing.[65] EUCAP Somalia remains an ambitious mission. However, the changes introduced since 2015 demonstrate a capacity for reflexivity in the face of failure, and a willingness to reorganise and refocus activity in response to lessons learned.

Conclusion: Learning from the Maritime - Innovation, Success and Failure

Maritime security capacity building is a growing field of international activity. It is an area that requires further study, both as a field in its own right, but also as a case to develop best practices for capacity building and security sector reform in other arenas. The capacity building measures that we have described have similarities with such endeavours on land in terms of methodology (training programmes, mentoring, the provision of equipment and infrastructure as well as workshops and table-top exercises) but they are unique in terms of design and approach (innovative regional building attempts, informal governance, geospatial knowledge production).

The WIO region has been a crucible of innovation in this regard. The state of emergency felt around piracy off the coast of Somalia between 2008 and 2012 encouraged a wide range of states and international organisations to engage in ways that have persisted since the decline of the pirate problem. The novel nature of the field – with few existing models of capacity building in the maritime arena to draw on, and little experience of similar initiatives on land on behalf of the actors involved – has led to a series of experimental initiatives taking place. These include maritime variants of security sector reform, but also wider activities aimed at regional security governance, informal, networked, multinational coordination, information sharing and maritime domain awareness.

As befits their experimental nature, they have not always been successful, with a number of redundant and failed programmes, and a tendency to repeat pathologies similar to those experienced by comparable activities on land. Even so, capacity building efforts in the region have endured, showing some capacity for lesson learning, and evolving to address the wider maritime security and blue growth concerns prioritised by regional states themselves.

The maritime capacity building experience has potentially important implications for other maritime regions and for other fields too, particularly those that entail the governance of complex security challenges by multiple actors. One clear implication regards the opportunities offered by informal arrangements such as the CGPCS. By focussing on shared problems, open participation and practically orientated working groups, such approaches have provided inclusive mechanisms for coordinating multiple actors, including states, international organisations and private or community interests such as shippers and fishers. Informal approaches in the WIO have lowered the political stakes of participation for national actors, as well as the risks of failure for new or

experimental initiatives. Their participatory nature reduced diplomatic protocol, and encouraged regular contact and communication between stakeholders, many of whom had little experience of working together previously. In so doing, they contributed to trust building between actors, and facilitated information sharing, lesson learning and the development of shared repertoires of practice.

The maritime capacity building experience has other lessons too. Many of the pathologies and failures of such activities repeat similar experiences from past decades of development, peacebuilding and SSR work on land. These challenges emphasise the continuing need for more reflective and reflexive approaches amongst international capacity builders, and a willingness to take local context and existing forms of knowledge and practice within regions more seriously than has often been the case. They also suggest the importance of ensuring that maritime security governance arrangements in the WIO – such as the IOMCF or DCoC – establish mechanisms that enable them to act as repositories of knowledge and information sharing on best, promising and failed practices from capacity building in the region. Ironically, perhaps, such a requirement suggests an increasing institutionalisation of such arrangements and may point to the limitations of informal governance approaches over time.

Notes

[1] G7, *Foreign Ministers' Declaration*, 1.

[2] Council of the EU, *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*, 3.

[3] Indian Ministry of Defence, *Ensuring Secure Seas*, 90.

[4] République Français, *National Strategy*, 42.

[5] HM Govt. *UK National Strategy*, 9.

[6] US Govt. *The National* Strategy, 5.

[7] Council of the EU, EU *Maritime Security Strategy*, 9-11.

[8] Though see Jacobsen, "Maritime Security and Capacity Building", 238-56; Khalid, "With a Little Help from my Friends", 426-46.

[9] Cornwall, "Buzzwords and Fuzzwords", 472.

[10] Eade, *Capacity Building*: 3.

[11] Juncos and Edmunds, "Constructing the Capable State", 15.

[12] Venner, "The Concept of 'Capacity'", 90.

[13] Samatar, Lindberg and Mahayni, "The Dialectics of Piracy in Somalia", 1378-81.

[14] World Bank. *The Pirates of Somalia*, xii-xiv.

[15] Edmunds, "Maritime Security Sector Reform", 3.

[16] Sander et al., "Conceptualizing Maritime Environmental Natural Resources Law Enforcement", 116-9.

[17] Gluck, "Piracy and the Production of Security Space", 652.

[18] Till, *Seapower*, 271-303; Speller, *Understanding Naval Warfare*, Ch. 4.

[19] Ejdus, "Here is your Mission", 470.

[20] For a review see Jackson and Bakrania, "Is the Future of SSR Non-Linear?".

[21] Sandoz, "Maritime Security Sector Reform", 1.

[22] Edmunds, *Security Sector Reform*, 25-7.

[23] Bueger and Edmunds, "Mastering Maritime Security", 8-17.

[24] Bueger and Edmunds, "Beyond Seablindness",1311.

[25] Bueger, Stockbruegger and Werthes, "Pirates, Fishermen and Peacebuilding", 356-381.

[26] Bueger, "Drops in the Bucket", 17.

[27] Vreÿ, "Turning the Tide", 1-23.

[28] IMO, *Djibouti Code of Conduct*, i.

[29] IMO, "The Jeddah Amendment"; Menzel, "Institutional Adoption", 153.

[30] UNODC, *Global Maritime Crime Programme*, 10.

[31] EU EEA, *Supporting the Development of Maritime Security*.

[32] European Commission, "Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security", 4-7.

[33] Bueger and Tholens, "Theorizing Capacity Building".

[34] Van de Ven et.al., *The Innovation Journey*, 213.

[35] Lopez, "Rethinking Regionalism", 663-88.

[36] MacLeod and Wadrop, "Operational Analysis at Combined Maritime Forces*",* 3.

[37] Bueger, "Territory, Authority and Expertise", 625.

[38] IMO, *Djibouti Code of Conduct*: 2.

[39] European Commission, "Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security", 1-2.

[40] European Commission, "Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security", 8.

[41] Ricigliano, "Networks of Effective Action", 445-6.

[42] Donais, "Security Sector Reform", 42.

[43] Jackson and Bakrania, "Is the Future of SSR Non-Linear?", 16-21

[44] Bueger and Edmunds, "Beyond Seablindness", 1303-4.

[45] Swarttouw and Hopkins, "The Contact Group", 12-13.

[46] Swarttouw and Hopkins, "The Contact Group", 11, 14, 17.

[47] Missiroli and Popowski, "Foreword", 4.

[48] Houben, "Operational Coordination", 31.

[49] Guilfoyle, "Prosecuting Pirates", 75-7.

[50] Houben, "Operational Coordination": 33.

[51] UNODC, *Global Maritime Crime Programme*, 10

[52] UNODC, *Global Maritime Crime*:11

[53] Steinberg, "Free Seas", 270; John Mack, *The Sea*, 74.

[54] Seychelles News Agency, "Seychelles Taking Steps".

[55] Bueger, "Effective Maritime Domain Awareness", 7.

[56] Bueger, "Effective Maritime Domain Awareness": 4.

[57] RMIFC, "About RMIFC"; Seychelles News Agency, "Soon in Seychelles".

[58] Doorey, "Maritime Domain Awareness", 124-41.

[59] Edmunds, Juncos and Algar-Faria, "EU Local Capacity Building".

[60] Ejdus, "Here is your Misson": 472-4.

[61] Ejdus, "Here is your Misson": 472-4.

[62] Ahmed, "Unravelling the Puzzle of Piracy", 44-6.

[63] Le Blanc, Freire and Vierro, *Mapping the Linkages*, 20-3.

[64] Houben, "Operational Coordination", 32.

[65] Ejdus, "Here is your Mission": 474-5.

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